

is for JUNGLE that grows in your mind.

When you walk there, what do you find?

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They started to break down the door he had slammed and locked behind him. Seeing no escape and being too winded to run much further anyway, he closed his eyes, and ducked into the Jungle.

The afternoon torrents came down, drumming on the broad leaves and rinsing him clean. He followed the usual path, winding like varicose veins, passing the ruined temple to the clearing where the Jaguar lived.

On his way, he caught a monkey with a trick—telling it that he had a secret, whispering so it couldn't quite hear. It crept closer, curious, and he whispered even quieter until finally it was inches from his face. That's when he grabbed it around the neck and squeezed so it couldn't get away.

He met up with Jaguar, who looked tired. One of his fangs was broken.

"I brought you a monkey, Jaguar. It's the kind you like."

"A monkey would be welcome. My tooth is killing me, and I haven't been able to hunt." Jaguar spoke thickly, his gums swollen. He sounded like an old man.

"What happened?"

"A macaw tricked me. It had a beak full of rocks, and when I bit it one of my teeth broke."

"Still, better that than being the macaw."

"That's true. I suppose you want to lay with my wife?"

"I need to borrow her strength."

"Is this what Old Jaguar has become? A pimp to his own wife?"

"Of course, that's why I brought the monkey."

"It's rude to point it out so bluntly!" Jaguar eyed the man, and then the monkey in his hands. "Well, get into her hut and have your way with her. Bring that monkey here first."

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In the hut, Jaguar Woman was curled half-asleep. Her amber eyes opened a slit when he knelt by her. Other than her eyes and how she moved, she looked human, and beautiful. But where Jaguar had a man's voice and manner, Jaguar Woman was a beastly thing with a hunting cat's growl.

She rumbled low in her throat. He cuffed her in the mouth, and she arched her back and rolled over—all it took was that little show of dominance. They rolled and howled together, writhing and contorting as he had her. When his release came and he filled her with his seed, into him flowed the spirit of the beast, the Jaguar, with its skull-crushing jaws, silent speed, and invisibility in the darkness.

Back through the jungle, he moved with the slinking power of the cat, sniffing his way back to his room, back to the minute just after the one he'd slipped away from. He stepped out of the Jungle...

...and back into the room. His door splintered open a moment later, but what the men chasing him found waiting for them wasn't what they'd expected. It wasn't how fast he moved nor how strong he was that terrified them. It was those utterly pitiless, golden eyes and the half-smile of wry amusement as he met their violence with his own. Killing them didn't even make his heart beat faster, and then he was out the window, and down the fire escape.

He left everything behind, trusting the Jungle to provide.

When the police came much later, they couldn't say for certain whether man or beast had been unleashed in that place.

WHAT CAN I DO?

There is a Jungle growing in your mind. *The Jungle*.

Close your eyes, gaze inwards, and its primordial trees spring up around you, engulfing your mundane surroundings. It is humid, subtropical, and ancient. Vast vine-choked temples are to be found in the Jungle. Animal gods who know esoteric secrets. Hidden springs run with waters that wash away your human troubles—worry, stress, sin. If you brave the Jungle's dangers, you can find many powerful things here. With effort, you can put the Jungle into other people's minds, even cause them to become lost there. While they're in the Jungle with you, they're subject to its laws and depredations. Some say the Jungle is like the Mad City—perhaps it's what came before.

(1-2 dice) Use a vision of the Jungle to guide you outside of it. Fight with a savage baboon in the Jungle, and you easily subdue a human attacker on the street. After fleeing a tribe of furious headhunters in the Jungle, you can easily outrun a pursuing cop in the park.

(3-4 dice) Quest in the Jungle for power, and return with it mere moments after you left. Gain Jaguar's strength and ferocity. Transform when nobody is looking into a huge, wildly colored parrot.

(5-6 dice) Put the Jungle into the minds of others. Take them with you on a Quest, or lose them in the Jungle to suffer some horrible fate among the savage creatures or the beast gods.

HOW DOES IT BREAK ME?

Fight—The throb of the Jungle, the animal smell of the beast gods, the distant drumbeat so much like your own heart, faster and faster. It's a savage, lawless place that calls to you, urging you to unleash some savage lawlessness of your own.

Flight—There's always something bigger than you, lurking in the foliage, and you can never forget that your death is just waiting for the right moment to pounce. Your only chance to survive is to run and run and run, before your death beats its savage lawlessness into you.

HOW DO I CHANGE?

Inevitably, the Jungle creeps in even when you don't call it. You see monkeys playing outside McDonalds, and then a huge anaconda curled up in the back seat of a cab. You hear the drumming, faintly in the distance. More and more of the ordinary world is overgrown, and eventually all you see is the Jungle.

WHAT AM I BECOMING?

When the Jungle eclipses everything, then it has you, inside and out. You wander the Jungle, you survive as long as you can, but eventually something gets you. You fall, you rot, and the Jungle grows on your body's nutrients. From a pod of the bong-tree pops a creature shaped like you, but all made of wood and moss, orchids and leaves—a creature very jealous of the Jungle and those who can visit there. You've become a *Jungle Jim*.

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